Promoting eye donations

*3. SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether eye donations in the country have increased this year but are still far from the target of two lakh corneas;

(b) whether to encourage eye donations, his Ministry has urged Government to increase one time financial assistance given to the 500 odd eye banks in the country;

(c) whether during the current year, eye collection is 32,000 but the need is to collect at least one lakh eyes every year;

(d) whether his Ministry has also laid emphasis on Cornea Retrieval Programme; and

(e) to what extent more aid to eye banks has helped to boost eye donations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) During the year 2007–08, 38596 donated eyes were collected in the country as compared to 19833 donated eyes collected during 2002–03 against the total requirement of around one lakh donated eyes per year.

(b) In order to encourage eye donation, it has been proposed to increase one time financial assistance from Rs. 10 lakh per eye bank during 10th Five Year Plan to Rs. 15 lakh per eye bank during 11th Five Year Plan.

(c) Against the total requirement of around one lakh donated eyes per year, 38,596 donated eyes were collected during 2007–08 (April, 2007 to March, 2008). During the current financial year, 2008–09 (April, 2008 till date) around 12,400 donated eyes have been collected in the country.

(d) In order to encourage eye donation among masses, IEC activities are being intensified under the programme. The major focus towards this direction is organization of National Eye Donation Fortnight from 25th August to 7th September every year. During the fortnight, intensified publicity through all available media is given to step up eye donation campaign and persuade people to donate eyes after death. The focus of the fortnight, has been shifted from “Pledging of Eyes” to “Actual Collection of Eyes” by launching “Hospital Retrievable Programme” in major hospitals with various specialities, teaching hospitals attached to Medical Colleges and large multi–specialty hospitals in Government and Non–Government Sector, Army, Railways, ESI and Industrial Establishments of the country. In addition to this, the message for eye donation is being propagated through various print and electronic media.

(e) One time assistance released to eye banks is utilized for equipments and furnishing. In addition to this, recurring assistance of Rs.1000 per pair of eye is also provided to Eye Banks towards honorarium of eye bank staff, consumables, including preservation of material and

media, transportation/POL and contingencies etc. This has resulted in increase in collection and preservation of donated eyes for better use.

Infant deaths due to clinical trials at AIIMS

*4. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as many as 49 babies had died at the AIIMS while being subjected to clinical trials for testing new drugs and therapies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has set up a special committee to probe reports of the deaths of children during clinical trials at the hospital and asked them to submit report within a week;

(d) if so, the details of the report submitted by the committee;

(e) whether Government proposes to review the policy of clinical trials; and

(f) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) to (d) Death of 49 children enrolled in 6 clinical trials at All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, was reported between January 2006 and June, 2008. These consisted of 4 clinical trials with drugs as interventions, one trial with feeding protocol and one with Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP). The Director, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, constituted a six member committee on 19th August, 2008, to inquire in the matter of clinical trials under the Chairmanship of Dr. Madhuri Behari, Professor and Head, Department of Neurology, AIIMS, New Delhi. The Committee scrutinized all the clinical trials including these 6 studies and submitted a report which observed that:

- All studies have scientific rationale and had undergone necessary scientific reviews.
- All Study protocols were approved by the Ethics Committee of AIIMS, New Delhi.
- Permission of Drug Controller General (I) were duly obtained where required.
- None of the deaths were attributable to the modalities tested and were due to underlying high risk illnesses and serious co-morbid disease conditions that the Children suffered from.
- None of the mortality rates reported under these trials is higher than that reported in patients with similar illnesses.

Presently, there is no proposal to review the policy of Clinical Trials.